

More than a competition: WorldSkills is a shop window for the UK

Neil Bentley (/News/author/neil-bentley) 13th October 2017 at 06:03

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WorldSkills Abu Dhabi 2017 will showcase world-class British apprentices and develop international relations, writes WorldSkills UK CEO Neil Bentley

Reading the list of countries that will be gathering in Abu Dhabi over the coming days - including Brazil, Germany, United States and South Korea – you could be forgiven for thinking that a meeting of the G20 had been called. Financial stability, youth envelopment and site escenceois esneed envelopment of cyponent will all be now the escendar of private site of control of the control o Close

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However, all those travelling are doing so to participate in WorldSkills Abu Dhabi 2017 (https://worldskillsabudhabi2017.com/en/), which will kick off with a glittering opening ceremony tomorrow.

For the 34 members of Team UK (https://www.tes.com/news/further-education/breaking-news/members-worldskills-team-uk-unveiled) who are taking part and their trainers, this week is a personal milestone. Collectively, those representing the UK will have completed over 71,000 hours of additional training with us over the last two years, and this is on top of their apprenticeship and study programmes. It is this level of dedication and preparation that is needed to compete on the world stage and win medals in their chosen skills.

Regarding WorldSkills Abu Dhabi 2017, which is expected to draw over 100,000 visitors including over 10,000 from around the world, as just a skills competition is, however, completely missing the point.

Unique platform

The 20 largest economies in the world are members of WorldSkills, as are the five most-populous. The membership represents two-thirds of the world's population. Senior government representatives from all member countries will be in attendance at WorldSkills Abu Dhabi, debating global economic and skills issues facing young people around the world. This, combined with the UK's top apprentices showcasing their talent, with the support of our world-class training managers, presents us with a unique platform to display the best of this country's youth skills to help build and reinforce global trade and investment partnerships.

Looking at the recent figures on trade, the United Arab Emirates, which hosts this year's WorldSkills event, has grown its imports from the UK by 42 per cent since 2009, while China, which will probably host in Shanghai in 2021, grew its imports by 123 per cent over the same period.

Furthermore, both China and the Middle East are in the top 10 of countries for foreign direct investment projects into the UK.

From my time as deputy head of the CBI, I know that inward investors worry about the technical skills levels in the UK, so we should be doing more to leverage the WorldSkills platform to sell the UK's world class skill base.

Neil Bentley is chief executive of WorldSkills UK

This is an edited version of an article in the 13 October edition of Tes. Subscribers can read the full article here (http://www.tes.com/news/tes-magazine/tes-magazine/worldskills-can-be-a-shop-window-uk-plc). To subscribe, click here (https://www.tes.com/store/magazine). This week's Tes magazine is available at all good newsagents. To download the digital edition, Android users can click here (https://play.google.com/store /apps/details?id=com.tsleducation.tesreader) and iOS users can click here (https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/tes-digital /id639580101?mt=8).

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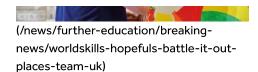
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